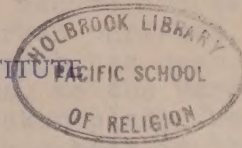


CHURCH NEWS

FROM THE NORTHERN COUNTRIES

Edited by
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Northern Bishops' Conference in Finland.

From August 24th - 29th, 30 bishops from the Northern countries met at Lärkkulla in Finland for a Northern Bishops' Conference. The discussions were confidential, but the agenda showed that the Conference dealt with, among other things, the ecumenical situation and the relation to Rome, evangelization in the society of our day and the problems of a big city, the Bible mission, and the question of reordination of ministers of other denominations who join the Northern National Churches.

The Conference issued the following appeal to the nations of the Northern countries:

The Northern Bishops have been assembled in Finland for an ordinary Conference on common problems. This taking place at a time of great tension in the world, we send the following message to the Churches and peoples of the Northern countries.

It is part of human life that light and dark alternate. We are, therefore, tempted either to arrogance or to fear and despair. No matter what happens to us, we must never forget that the God, whom we came to know through Christ, is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. His omnipotence and grace stand firm also in our generation.

Let us humble ourselves under the almighty hand of God so that His law and gospel may become salt and light in the lives of our peoples. Let not our hearts be confounded by the changes of time. There is no day so bright that we may wilfully take our lives in our own hands, nor any day so dark that the hand of God Almighty cannot hold us fast.

Let us not weary of praying for our Northern peoples and their Governments, for the leaders of the Great Powers and the United Nations, that God may guide their thoughts and actions so that His will with the nations may be done.

The Situation in the Northern Churches.

In connection with the Northern Bishops' Conference, the Swedish periodical in Finland "Försemlingsbladet", brought interviews with the Bishops W. Westergaard Madsen, Copenhagen; Sigurbjörn Einarsson, Reykjavik; Johannes Smemo, Oslo; and Archbishop Gunnar Moltgren, Uppsala.

"The religious situation in the Norwegian Church is promising", Bishop Smemo said. Not wanting to go so far as to say that he took an optimistic view of the future, he left it at "a promising situation", to which the other Bishops agreed.

"It must be admitted", Bishop Smemo went on, "that secularization has made headway since the turn of the Century. Church attendance has gone down, and also the country population has become increasingly influenced by practical materialism. In the urban parishes, however, an upward tendency in respect of church attendance has been noticeable in most recent years, owing, among other things, to the parochial drives and house-to-house visiting that have taken place from time to time. These campaigns have proved that "the door-bell is the best church bell". A very curious fact is that, according to various public opinion polls, the religious services on the radio are being listened to by up till 50 o/o of the population.

In later years, new contacts have also been established with the industrial world. At a recently established 'Congregational Institute' in Oslo, many fruitful conferences have been arranged for representatives of industrial workers and leaders. The Kirchentag in Trondheim at the end of July were attended by 150 industrial workers. The interest in Foreign Missions has likewise increased much. And in this field, a happy co-operation with the Government and Government authorities has been started, the authorities having got a new understanding of the work of Foreign Missions."

Bishop Westergaard Madsen does not believe that there are more "strangers to the Church" among the Danish people than at the beginning of the Century. The number of people resigning from the Church is negligible. But it is probably correct to say that only very few are sufficiently interested to go to church regularly on Sundays. The most important task for the Church at the moment is to teach the members of the congregation to attend Sunday services.

"The Danish 'Small Churches'-movement, which has put up one small church after the other in Greater Copenhagen during the last few decades, has played an important part in awakening the congregation to a realization of its religious responsibility. The municipal authorities to-day take it as a matter of course that there must be a church site in every new town district. 'The Church has no need of advertizing', a layman said recently to the Bishop. 'It shall just be there. After all, it is the pivot of our existence, and I do believe that the churches will soon be filled with people, because the Church has the answer to their deepest longings.'"

In this connection Archbishop Hultgren says that the Danish 'Small Churches'-movement has also inspired people in Sweden. In Uppsala, for instance, no new churches have been built from the Middle Ages until 1958, but since then he has assisted in the dedication of no less than four new small churches in the town. "During the last decade, a steady increase in church attendance has been noticeable everywhere. Thus a growing interest in the Church may be noted in industrial districts also. Another characteristic feature of the present time is the greater interest in confirmation."

Bishop Einarsson, Iceland, shares the views of his colleagues. He emphasizes that family prayers are becoming more and more unusual. Religious knowledge is likewise on the decline. But during the last 50 years, laymen have become actively engaged in Church work to a much larger extent than before. Half of the population of Iceland, or roughly 72,000 people, live now in Reykjavik. But of the 118 clergymen in the country, it has been possible to place only 9 in the city.

Many Northern Conferences and Rallies.

During the summer there have been many religious conferences and rallies for people from the Northern countries. A few of these are mentioned below:

Roughly 400 young people from the Northern countries met for a rally at Hillerød, Denmark, towards the end of July. The subjects for the meetings were inspired by the Danish Evangelical hymn composer L.A. Brorson. One of the chief speakers was the President of the Norwegian Lutheran Mission, Mr. Tormod Vågen.

At the end of July 280 Northern Folk High School members met at Maslev, Denmark, for the 13th Northern Christian Educational Youth Conference at which a number of problems in connection with the religious instruction and the education of young people were discussed.

The 18th Northern Home Mission Assembly took place in Hälsingborg, Sweden, at the end of August and was attended by 400 people. In connection with the Assembly the Northern Home Mission Council met at which the President of the Norwegian Lutheran Home Mission, Rev. Fredrik Wisløff, was elected President of the Council for the coming term of five years. The next Northern Home Mission Assembly is to take place in Oslo in 1966.

Anniversary of the Church in Ingermanland.

On the occasion of the 350 years' anniversary of the Church in Ingermanland, a special number of one of the periodicals in Ingermanland "Isien Usko" has been issued. In this number Bishop Sven Danell and Chaplain General Toivo Laitinen bring the congratulations of the Swedish and the Finnish Churches, and the history of the Church in Ingermanland until its abolition in 1937 is told. Ingermanland is now a part of the Soviet Union, but many former inhabitants of the district now scattered all over Finland and Sweden have kept their old faith and nationality.

DENMARK

Professor Skydsgaard Returns to the University of Copenhagen.

Professor K.E. Skydsgaard who last year was given a two years' leave of absence from his Professorship of Dogmatics and New Testament Exegesis in order to become Head of the Inter-Confessional Research Institute under the Lutheran World Federation, has decided to return to the University at the end of his leave on February 1st, 1962. Professor Skydsgaard has promised, however, to continue his work at the Institute as far as his work at the University will permit. According to the "Kristeligt Dagblad" the appointment of a successor to the Professor as full-time leader of the Institute is not expected until the meeting at Helsinki (Helsingfors) in 1963 of the Lutheran World Federation.

Professor Skydsgaard on the Second Vatican Council.

The Head of the Inter-Confessional Research Institute, Professor K.E. Skydsgaard, has published an article in the Danish periodical "Kirkens Verden" on the Second Vatican Council now being planned. In this article the Professor emphasizes that the Council is intended primarily for the strengthening and renewal of the Roman Catholic Church itself so that it may be better suited for its work in a world where so much has changed during the last few decades. The Council is to be

predominantly a "pastoral council of reforming".

The Roman Catholic Church has not changed its view of being the one true church, Professor Skydsgaard states, and, consequently, it knows of only one approach to the unity of the whole Church, viz. the return of "the departed brethren" to Rome. But it is hoped that the renewal of the Roman Church, which is the object of the Council, may facilitate such a return. The Professor mentions the newly established "Secretariate for the Promotion of the Unity of the Christians" as an expression of the good intentions of the Pope and goes on to say: "A spirit of liberty and fraternity as never before may be felt".

The Exceptional Position of Israel - a Request to the New Delhi Assembly.

A German-Scandinavian "Carmel Meeting" was held in August at Nyborg Strand, Denmark, and was attended by 200 members. The attitude of the Church to Israel was discussed under the heading "Solidarity or Opposition?" and the Meeting has passed a resolution stressing the exceptional position of Israel. The mission of the Church in respect of Israel cannot be regarded exclusively in the light of the commandment of Jesus on Ascension Day, the resolution says, in as much as Israel and the Church have a common revelation as their foundation, i.e., the Old Testament. The task of the Church in relation to Israel cannot, therefore, be incorporated in the ordinary work of Foreign Missions. We know of no other name for salvation, whether for the Church or for Israel, than Jesus Christ, but we do believe that both of them may be able to meet and become reconciled to one another through Him if only each of us will face our own position and special assignment in the story of Salvation. Therefore, the General Assembly of the World Council of Churches at New Delhi is requested to arrange it so that the Committee on the question of the Church and the Hebrew nation is not made part of the Division of World Mission, and that the Constitution is worded in such a way as to express clearly the new approach of the Church to Israel and the desire for real intercourse between the two.

The leader of the "Carmel Movement" is Rev. Per Faye Hansen, at the Mission to Seamen, Haifa.

Has the Original Object of Foreign Missions Been Forgotten?

"Friends of Foreign Missions at home and abroad show such overwhelming interest in institutions, social activities, administration of mission finances and organization of church work that it is hardly possible to discover any interest in or any feeling of the urgency of the fundamental and vital object: to preach the gospel and teach people what Christianity is. Nothing of this kind is demanded of us missionaries and still less is expected from us ... Therefore we do not get missionaries, either, who, above anything else, are evangelists."

This outspoken criticism of Foreign Missions appeared recently in the Danish "Kristeligt Dagblad" and was expressed by one of the missionaries of the Mission to the Santals in India, Miss Magda Krogh, and in an editorial the paper recommends taking the criticism up for consideration and discussion.

Miss Krogh strongly stresses the main issue of Foreign Missions to be the preaching of the gospel while much of the work described as "help to developing countries" might safely be left to others. She tells about new Christians flocking to the Churches at present, and continues: "If the missionaries were not so occupied at the mission stations with institutional matters and old traditions, there would be still many more new Christians." The article concludes:

"In a Church that is still expanding and in which clergymen and evangelists are wholeheartedly concerned with the passing on of the gospel it will be a long time before they say that they have no use for the missionaries. But where the missionaries themselves and those who have sent us out lose sight of the preaching of the gospel as the first and chief object of our work, we shall fairly soon have made ourselves superfluous."

News in Brief:

- In the autumn the Danish Broadcasting Corporation will introduce a 5 minute programme on Saturday nights, entitled "It is Sunday Tomorrow!". The programme will give information about which Sunday in the Church Year it is, the Scripture text fixed for the sermon on that Sunday will be read, and the programme concludes with a stanza of a hymn.

- This winter the Danish Television Corporation will bring three programmes describing the various church services and ceremonies of the Danish Lutheran National Church.

- In September the Rev. William J. Hanson and family, Denver, U.S.A., will arrive in Denmark. The American Lutheran Church has asked him to establish an English-speaking Lutheran congregation in Copenhagen for Americans and other English-speaking people temporarily or permanently domiciled in the City. Some years ago a similar congregation was started in Oslo which has now grown so much that the building of a church of their own is being contemplated.

- During the summer the Danish Help to Refugees has received 90 disabled refugees and their families from camps in Italy. All of them are expected to have been assimilated into the Danish society by the end of autumn on an equal footing with Danish citizens.

FINLAND

Missionary Society Sends Clergymen to the Mission Field.

The Finnish Missionary Society has invited Finnish clergymen to take part in the work on the mission field for some time, in order, on their return, to tell about their experiences and work for the support of Foreign Missions in their congregations. The Society will pay travelling expenses, cost of living abroad and the possible support of a family at home.

The reason for this invitation is that the home loaves of the missionaries have been shortened and that many missionaries must spend this time on further training, so that they cannot contribute very much to the work at home. To this comes the feeling that too few Finnish clergymen have any real knowledge of Foreign Mission work.

The offer is open also to divinity students. The Missionary Society is engaged in various places in Asia and Africa.

American Undergraduates Paint Seamen's Church in Finland.

For a fortnight this summer 25 undergraduates from various universities in Colorado, U.S.A., have been visiting the Finnish town of Kotka, and during their stay they undertook to paint the seamen's church in the town. The young people, members of the Werley Foundation's Travelling and Working Training College, were on a tour of Europe under the guidance of the Rev. Alan R. Cluson.

% of the Programmes on Commercial Television Are Religious.

The Commercial television company in Finland "Telsvisio" last year devoted no less than 13,7 % of the sending time to religious programmes. Director, Mr. Wäinö J. Nurimaa, states in an interview in the "Helsingin Sanomat". 19,4 % of the programmes were programmes of entertainment; 9,4 % children's programmes, including Bible readings for children and 8 % programmes of information.--

"Telsvisio" holds a Government concession expiring in 1963. The company advertises only in connection with the programmes of entertainment but the profit from these pay for all the other programmes together.

Election of New Bishop in the Swedish Diocese in Finland.

The election of a new Bishop of the Swedish Diocese in succession to the late Bishop Dr. G.O. Rosengvist took place on September 6th. The following three candidates received the highest numbers of votes: 1) Dr. Karl-Erik Forssell, Åbo (Turku), 2) Professor Dr. Helge Nyberg, Åbo (Turku) and 3) Dr. Olav Schalin, Dean of Borgå (Pervo). The President of Finland has to appoint one of these three candidates as Bishop.

News in Brief:

As from August 1st this year, Rev. Toivo Harjunpää has been appointed Professor of Historical Theology at the Berkely Lutheran Theological College in California. Until he became minister in Berkely 10 years ago, Mr. Harjunpää was Secretary to Archbishop Aleksii Lehtonen, Helsinki.

NORWAY

Bishop Bjarne Skard Dead.

The Bishop of the Diocese of Tunsberg, Bishop Bjarne Skard, has died, 65 years old. Bishop Skard was Honorary Doctor in Divinity at the University of Uppsala and his main theological work was a historical account of "The Dogma of Christ and the Incarnation".

Three Episcopal Elections This Year.

Besides the See of Tunsberg, which fell vacant on the death of Bishop Skard, the Sees of North-Halogaland and Bjørgvin (Bergen) are to be filled during the autumn. At the ballot in North-Halogaland, the chaplain at "Vor Frue Kirke" in Trondheim, Ottar Bondevik, obtained most votes as no. 1 and at the same time the highest number of votes altogether.

All Attended Kirchentag at Trondheim.

The Kirchentag at Trondheim, arranged by the Norwegian Congregational Institute at the end of July were better attended than had been expected. Roughly 800 people from all over Norway took part in the whole programme besides the many who were present at only some of the events on the programme. A great number were people of various vocations with whom one had come in contact through some 50 "contact conferences" conducted in the course of the last years.

The group discussions and lectures were aimed at making the congregations, collectively as well as individually, interested in social problems and Foreign Missions. Guests from the U.S.A., Germany, Scotland, Tanganyika, Finland and Denmark took part in the rally.

It was resolved to conduct such a Kirchentag again in 1963, the place to be fixed later on by the Congregational Institute.

Tension Between the Church and the Voluntary Organizations.

The state of tension between the Church and the voluntary organizations in Norway was further aggravated by the Kirchentag this summer in Trondheim, arranged by the Congregational Institute. Several leaders of voluntary organizations have been rather unsympathetic towards the Institute and other enterprises by the Church which aim at arousing the individual members of the congregations to greater activity, as they are afraid that they will prove a competition to the voluntary Christian organizations which have been, and still are, very important to Norwegian Church life, as well as a threat to their continued independence.

The Head of the Congregational Institute, Mr. Eilert Dehlin, M.A., emphasized at Trondheim that there was no desire for competition, but for co-operation with all who felt responsible for bringing the word of God and the Christian fellowship to everyone in the congregations. In this connection, he also expressed the general desire to engage the parish councils in religious work besides their usual occupation with church administration and finances.

4 % of Norwegian Children Attend Sunday School.

According to statistics, presented at the recent annual meeting of the Norwegian Sunday School Union, 4 % of all Norwegian children attend Sunday school. The Sunday School Union, belonging to the Lutheran National Church, includes 3,160 Sunday schools with 176,000 children and 9,400 teachers.

A request by the Joint Conference of the Diocesan Councils for the setting up of a committee to deal with topical problems in connection with Sunday school work, was rejected after a lively discussion. The Diocesan Councils had intimated that the inclusion in the committee of a couple of representatives of the Diocesan Councils would be appreciated. The reason given for the rejection was that the Sunday School Union wants to continue as an independent organization.

Still No Women in the General Assembly of the Norwegian Lutheran Mission.

The General Assembly of the Norwegian Lutheran Mission will continue also in the future to consist of only men. A proposal that women should be eligible, including the provision that all decisions concerning matters of confession should then be transferred from the General Assembly to the Board and the Executive Committee of which only men may be members, was turned down as it did not obtain the necessary two thirds' majority. The proposal had been put forward by a committee, appointed to investigate the matter, and a majority of the Board of Directors, among whom is Secretary-General Tormod Vågen. There were 63 votes in favour of the proposal, 159 against and 5 blank.

The question of women's eligibility to the General Assembly has been discussed since 1901.

Norwegian Church Establishes Model Farm in Nigeria.

On the recommendation of the Protestant Church and the Government in East Nigeria, "Kirkens Nødhjelp" (the Inter-Church Aid Organization of the Norwegian Church) has decided to set up its farming project in East Nigeria, viz. in the Abakaliki district. The idea is to build a model farm so as to teach the population better and more profitable farming methods as well as to offer other kinds of help as part of the Church aid to developing countries.

From the German Church collection "Bread for the World" the Norwegian Missionary Society has received 650,000 Norwegian crowns for the setting up and running of an agricultural school over a period of five years on Madagascar.

Church Course on Developing Countries.

From September 8th - 11th a course was arranged by the Church Academy on the situation in the developing countries and the technical assistance to these countries.

This summer the Department on Family Matters, under which the Help to Developing Countries belongs, has invited a number of private relief institutions, among them "Kirkens Nødhjelp" (the Inter-Church Aid Organization of the Norwegian Church), to a conference in order to discuss what might be done from Norway. At the same time, the Department has asked the missionary societies to provide a survey of their humanitarian and social undertakings.

A committee of 17 members has submitted a report on the establishment of a Norwegian "Peace Corps". The report suggests that the Corps be open to men and women above 19 years of age who agree to serve in developing countries for a period of at least two years, this service being politically and ideologically neutral. The members of the Corps will share, as far as it is safe for health reasons, the living conditions of the local populations.

2,000 Methodists Attend World Conference in Oslo.

Some 2,000 Methodists from 23 different countries were assembled in Oslo from August 17th - 25th for the Tenth World Congress of the Methodist Church, this being the first one to be held outside of the English-speaking world. The opening of the Congress was attended by King Olav who later received some of the leaders in private audience. Among the many messages to the Conference was one from President Kennedy in which he said: "We all need spiritual guidance in order to carry out the tasks set before us in life." Of the 1,100 actual delegates 63 were bishops.

The present President, Dr. Harold Roberts, England, was succeeded by an American, Bishop Fred P. Corson. At the Conference the Constitution of the Council was revised with a view to a strengthening of co-operation. Some quarters described the revision as a step in the direction of a common, universal Methodist Church, but it was emphasized at the Conference that the purpose was to make the contribution of Methodism to the whole Christian Church more forcible and more valuable.

SWEDEN

The Swedish Bishops on Marriage and Divorce.

The Bishops of the Swedish Lutheran National Church have issued the following pastoral letter on marriage and divorce:

What it is.

In 1959, 50,168 marriages were contracted in Sweden. In the same year, 8,761 divorces were granted. According to all rules, this means some 9,000 "children of divorces" (below 15 years of age) in one year and roughly 90,000 children over a ten year-period, provided the present rate of divorces is kept up.

At the same time, experience and all investigations show that it is these very children, or children from unhappy or tottering homes, that most easily fall prey to juvenile delinquencies: assault, drinking, crime.

So the children are those to pay. The children are made to suffer for the failures of the adults.

Of course, those for whom things went wrong, are not to blame. That would be blame. That would be most un-Christian. The blame for the undermining of marriage must be laid, not on those who fell short, but on the wantonness in regard to marriage which in later years has affected large sections of public opinion. At a time, when a complicated society makes heavier demands on a marriage than ever before, an attitude of greater maturity and determination would have been preferable.

What it should be.

Marriage is a union that binds together two people and their children. "And the two shall become one flesh."

Marriage has its own laws. They are valid at all times and for all men. They are: loyalty, love, consideration. If these laws are kept, the marriage will keep. Despite dangers and adversities which nobody can avoid. In return, marriage will give a home and a family life that is "the greatest joy on earth".

To enter rashly into marriage is unrealistic. If a marriage is to be a true marriage, it will not do to found it on a love which is but a chance infatuation, nor for motives that take into consideration only oneself. Marriage is not a legal institution for casual love affairs.

To marry is to embark upon something which is intended to last for the rest of one's life. Marriage is contracted "for better, for worse" until death. It is indissoluble. It is an undertaking for life. What God has joined together, man must not separate."

Divorce? The Lord of the Church is against divorce. That it exists is because of the "hardness" of our hearts.

A divorce may be the rescue of two who are about to go down. But far too often it is the expression of escape, of weakness, of failing to try to adapt oneself to somebody else.

his has to be done.

Family consultation centres and compulsory mediation are excellent. No expedient is too costly in order to save even a frayed marriage.

Are there no other ways in which to keep down this alarming number of divorces? We will point to an important factor - which must be made an important factor.

Our people is not given proper and unambiguous information about the basis, the conditions, and the responsibilities of marriage. At this point we need a revival so that marriage guidance becomes an integral part of the education of the nation. So far, the instruction of candidates for confirmation has had to bear the brunt of it almost alone. Let marriage guidance be included in the school curriculum, for instance. But as a proper school subject, i.e. an instruction according to a definite conception and with clear-cut standards so that it may be able to answer the question of the young people: What are we to go by?

And the homes? Here it is imperative that parents venture to direct their young - especially by their own example. If the homes are not real homes, and if they are unable to teach the children what is right and what is wrong, then all social and public endeavours are in vain.

What is the conception of marriage to be imparted through such instruction? The Christian. Which our nation has had since times immemorial. The distortion of this view has been the great onslaught on marriage in recent times. The profit-mongers, who in words, in pictures, and print have preached that everybody is free and entitled to take what he can and do what he likes, have had palmy days. In their trail lie countless tragedies.

What do we want? There are signs that, in these matters, people are beginning to tire of the era of wilfulness and to long for an era of feeling responsible. A new appreciation of the grandeur and happiness of a healthy, lifelong marriage is what we need.

Are the homes and the authorities of our society prepared to make a real, constructive contribution in this matter?

0,5 % Resign from the Lutheran National Church.

About one half per cent of the members of the Swedish Lutheran National Church have resigned from the Church since the Act about Freedom of Religion was passed in 1952. The first year the total number of resignations was roughly 20,000. Since then, it has been more than doubled in the Diocese of Uppsala and nearly doubled in the Diocese of Linköping, Luleå and Växjö. In a few big town parishes up to 2 % have resigned.

These figures are taken from statistics compiled by the president of the Swedish Clergymen's Association, Dr. Ove Hassler, but before the Clergymen's Meeting in September in the Diocese of Linköping.

The rule that a person wanting to resign from the Lutheran National Church must apply in person to the local minister is still in force. For several years, the Free Churches have tried to have it

mended so that resignations may be done in writing, on the pleas that many people hesitate to go to a minister with such a request. The majority of Free Church members remain members of the Lutheran national Church as well.

Government Grant to Foreign Missions for Aid to Developing Countries.

In a new report on the Swedish Aid to Developing Countries, published by the Commission set up for this purpose, it says that "it would be in concordance with the Swedish policy of assistance if Government gave grants to Foreign Missions in support of such enterprises as may be considered necessary and useful from the point of view of aid to developing countries." After having mentioned the relief programmes already launched by the Swedish Co-operative Union and Wholesale Society and the Confederation of Swedish Trade Unions, which might be supported and further consolidated by Government subsidies, the report particularly emphasizes the extensive contribution of Foreign Missions in the fields of nursing, education, and vocational training, and the Commission advocates that people employed by the missionary societies in such work receive the same privileges as Government representatives in the developing countries in respect of health insurances, possible leave of absence from public offices, the calculation of seniority, etc.

A recent debate in the Swedish Parliament did not give the impression that Government was inclined to give direct financial support to the humanitarian undertakings of Foreign Missions, but rather that missionary enterprises might be included in the semi-official collection "Sweden Helps", according to which Government allocates an amount equalling the sum obtained through voluntary contributions. A couple of applications from missionary societies for rather large grants have been submitted to Government for consideration.

Public Opinion Poll on Religious Questions.

The Swedish Institute for Public Opinion Surveys has conducted an investigation with regard to religious matters. To the question, "Do you believe that people in our time need religion or are they just as well or better off without it?", 82 o/o answered that people need religion, 9 o/o that they could do just as well without it, and 1 o/o that they were better off without religion. 8 o/o did not know. To the question, "Have you been to church in the last four weeks (not counting weddings, funerals and christenings)?", 9 o/o answered "several times", 11 o/o "once" and 77 o/o "not at all".

Dr. Stanley Jones on the Great Openings for Foreign Missions.

The prominent American missionary, Dr. Stanley Jones, paid a visit to Sweden this summer. In an interview with the Free Church Press Bureau he took an optimistic view of the possibilities of Foreign Missions:

"I am firmly convinced that the decade now lying before us has the possibility of becoming one of the most fruitful periods in the annals of the Church. People everywhere seem to have grown tired of both the old and the new ways of life. The result is a spiritual vacuum which the Christian gospel alone is able to fill. As never before, discouraged men and women turn to the gospel for refuge. In this very fact lies a tremendous opening which we must make the best possible use of."

System of National Churches Incompatible with Complete Freedom of Religion.

At present the Liberal Party in Sweden, the second largest in the country, is engaged on the drafting of a new Party platform. The committee appointed to go into the matter of the relation of State and Church advocates that all churches be placed on an equal footing. The Swedish system of a National Church, according to which membership of the Swedish nation and of the Lutheran National Church are practically synonymous, is described as being incompatible with absolute freedom of religion. It is suggested that children of parents belonging to the Lutheran National Church do not, as at present, automatically become members of this Church at birth, but only at the time of baptism. It is recommended, moreover, that the national registers be kept by ordinary Government officials instead of by the ministers, as hitherto, and that the churches be treated alike economically, i.e. with regard to church taxation, and the right to deduct for assessment purposes the amount paid in church contributions the previous year. Regardless of the nature of future relations between State and Church, the instruction in religion in the schools should be maintained.

News in Brief:

- The final report on the 9-year Swedish public school, published this summer, leaves the position of religious instruction in the curriculum unchanged.
- In the autumn, the Swedish State Broadcasting Corporation will begin, as an experiment, a series of two weekly 5-minute programmes at 22.05 o'clock on the Second Programme.
- The 80-years old Bishop of the Estonian Orthodox Church in Sweden, Bishop Jüri Välbe, has died. Bishop Välbe arrived in Sweden in 1901 and was elected Bishop in 1956.

